



News Release

For Immediate Release:

October 20, 2010

Media Contacts:

Mark Gaskill, M.A.

All Payer Claims Database Manager

(o) 801-538-6482 (m) 801-949-2803

Carol Masheter, Ph.D.

Epidemiologist

(o) 801-538-6355 (m) 801-493-9114

Report Examines Medical Claims for Healthy vs. Unhealthy Utahns

(Salt Lake City, UT) – While many people commonly budget for housing, food, clothing and transportation, most don't set aside money for health care. Young adults in particular often assume that if they're healthy, they don't need health care. The *Making Cents of Utah's Healthy Population Report*, just released by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Health Data Committee (HDC), provides a snapshot of healthy people whose commercial insurance plans paid for at least part of their health care in 2009.

Data were taken from Utah's All Payer Claims Database (APCD), which houses commercial health care claims data from providers around the state. Healthy people were defined as those without significant acute or chronic disease and who received some degree of routine health care. Overall, the report examines the claims of more than 350,000 Utah residents aged 0-64. The data do not include Medicare or Medicaid claims.

According to the report, nearly 50% of the healthy people whose 2009 claims were analyzed live in the Utah County areas of Lehi/Cedar Valley, American Fork/Alpine, and Pleasant Grove/Lindon. The Provo/BYU area had the lowest percentage of healthy people, at less than 30% of all health care plan members. However, the Provo/BYU area also had the highest percentage of "non-users", who were excluded from the report because they did not use health care in 2009.

Additional key findings include the difference in costs between caring for the healthy versus treating the sick. For instance, among commercially insured Utahns in 2009, those classified as

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 -Report Examines Medical Claims for Healthy vs. Unhealthy Utahns

healthy cost \$385 annually, or \$32 per month; whereas those deemed less healthy cost \$1,764 or \$147 per month. The average cost for healthy females was \$407 annually compared to \$359 for healthy males. Healthy people were more likely to get annual checkups and screenings. In contrast, people who did not use health care or were diagnosed and treated for at least one chronic or acute condition cost on average \$2,768 annually or \$231 per month.

“With current national and state concerns about health care costs and quality, this information can help us set priorities on how to attain and maintain the highest standard of health for all Utahns,” said Dr. David Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director. “We need these data to let all stakeholders know how better to spend health care dollars and let the public know about the best preventive care practices,” Sundwall added.

The report also contains information on the differences between males and females in categories like prescription drug use. Healthy males used medications to treat skin conditions most frequently (35%), followed by antivirals (6%) and asthma bronchodilators (6%). Among healthy females, contraceptives (28%) were utilized most often, followed by skin medications (25%) and cephalosporins, a class of antibiotics (4%).

“As consumers take on more responsibility for their own health and the cost of that care, reports like this can provide helpful information about where to spend scarce dollars,” said report author and UDOH epidemiologist Carol Masheter, Ph.D. “If we spend our health care money on annual checkups and other preventive care, we’ll likely save money down the road.”

A copy of the report can be found at <http://utahatlas.health.utah.gov>.

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.